

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
SSM-03 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 MCT-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
AID-05 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00  
NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 /105 W  
-----171418Z 080965 /40

O R 170911Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3357

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 230

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1179

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ASEC, PINS, MILI, LE

SUBJECT: JUNBLATT ASSASSINATION - THE SITUATION MARCH 17

REF: BEIRUT 1166 (DTG 161630Z MAR 77) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. THE ASSASSINATION OF KAMAL JUNBLATT EARLY  
AFTERNOON MAR 16 PREDICTABLY HAS SERIOUSLY EXACERBATED TENSION  
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IN LEBANON, AND A SEIGE ATMOSPHERE REMINISCENT OF DARKER DAYS  
QUICKLY SETTLED OVER BEIRUT. SOME CHRISTIAN MILITIA ELEMENTS  
IN EAST BEIRUT HAD THE POOR SENSE TO ATTEMPT SOME CELEBRATION.  
IN WEST BEIRUT, SPORADIC SHOOTING ERUPTED; A NUMBER OF  
CHRISTIANS WERE REPORTEDLY KIDNAPPED, AT LEAST THREE KILLED,  
AND SOME STILL BEING HELD. POPULATION ON BOTH SIDES OF TOWN  
HAS REACTED GENERALLY WITH EXTREME CAUTION, AND IS NOT GOING

OUT ON THE STREETS. JUMBLATT'S SON WALID HAS AGREED TO HAVE THE FUNERAL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO CALM THE SITUATION, AND IT HAS BEEN SET FOR 1300 LOCAL TODAY, MAR 17, AT MUKHTARA. (AMBASSADOR, ON UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATION, NOT ATTENDING.) POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF ALL PERSUASIONS IS DOING ITS BEST TO CALM SITUATION. ASSASSINS, WHO REPORTEDLY NUMBERED FOUR, HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPREHENDED. WE HAVE NO CLUE TO THEIR IDENTITY. NEITHER DOES GOL ACCORDING OUR SOURCES. END SUMMARY.

2. WORD OF JUMBLATT'S ASSASSINATION SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE IN BEIRUT AFTERNOON OF MAR 16 AND RAISED INSTANT APPREHENSIONS OF RETALIATION. BY 1700 LOCAL A SEIGE ATMOSPHERE, REMINISCENT OF DARKER DAYS SIX MONTHS AGO, HAD SETTLED OVER BEIRUT. ASF UNITS WERE ALERTED FOR TROUBLE AND IMMEDIATELY INTENSIFIED THEIR PATROLLING ACTIVITY BY FOOT AND VEHICLE, AND THEIR SEARCHES OF VEHICLES, BUT TRAFFIC WAS FAR BELOW NORMAL.

3. IN THE CHRISTIAN CENTRAL CITY OF ASHRAFIYAH, THERE WAS SOME SHOOTING OF WEAPONS IN THE AIR IN CELEBRATION AT ABOUT 1700 LOCAL, DESPITE EFFORTS BY THE TOP CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL, TO COOL THEIR FOLLOWERS. ASF ELEMENTS IMMEDIATELY DEPLOYED ON THE STREETS AND PROMPTLY RESTORED RELATIVE QUIET.

4. IN WEST BEIRUT, LATE MAR 16, SPORADIC SHOOTING INCIDENTS OCCURRED, PARTICULARLY IN THE MAZRAA AND

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RUE VERDUN AREAS. WE HAVE SOME REPORTS OF DRUZE GROUPS AND LEFTIST MILITIAS REAPPEARING ON THE STREETS WITH WEAPONS, AND TEMPORARY ROADBLOCKS BEING SET UP -- SOME WITH THE TRADITIONAL BURNING TIRES.

5. REPRISALS. THERE ARE SEVERAL UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF RETALIATIONS, THE MOST SERIOUS OF WHICH WE HAVE HEARD SO FAR, FROM THE MAYOR OF DEIR AL QAMAR, CAMILLE CHAMOUN'S HOME TOWN, BEING THAT 14 CHRISTIANS IN THE SHUF WERE SHOT BY DRUZE LATE MAR 16. WE UNDERSTAND THE MAYOR AND THE LOCAL ASF COMMANDER ARE ATTEMPTING TO CALM THE SITUATION, ALTHOUGH THEY KNOW THAT LOCAL CHRISTIANS ARE ALREADY PLANNING A COUNTER-REPRISAL. WALID JUMBLATT AND SHEIKH AQL OF DRUZE, MOHAMMED ABU SHAGRA, REPORTEDLY HAVE GONE FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE IN SHUF TRYING TO CALM DRUZE AND CHRISTIANS.

6. IN WEST BEIRUT, WE ARE TOLD THAT PSP AND DRUZE ELEMENTS, WORKING SEPARATELY, KIDNAPPED

A NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS LATE MAR 16. MANY BUT NOT ALL ARE STILL HELD, AND IT IS RUMORED CONTACTS ARE NOW UNDERWAY TO ATTEMPT THEIR RELEASE. CONFIRMED REPORTS FROM ASF SOURCES INDICATE THREE CHRISTIANS WERE SHOT ON THE STREETS OF WEST BEIRUT LATE MAR 16.

7. CAUTION. EARLY MAR 17, SITUATION SEEMS TO BE TENSE, BUT RELATIVELY QUIET. WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF SHOOTING INCIDENTS, BUT PEOPLE ARE LARGELY STAYING OFF THE STREETS. FEW EMBASSY EMPLOYEES FROM THE CHRISTIAN SIDE OF TOWN HAVE APPEARED FOR WORK. AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY STAFF ARE CANCELLING OUTSIDE CALLS. AUB IS CLOSED MAR 17.

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SCS-03 OC-06 CCO-00 IO-13 /105 W  
-----171416Z 081044 /42

O R 170911Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3358  
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 231  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM  
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER  
COMSIXTHFLT  
CTF SIX ZERO  
CTF SIX ONE  
CTF SIX TWO  
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO  
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA  
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CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 1179

8. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR JUMBLATT WERE QUICKLY SET. HIS SON WALID, WE UNDERSTAND, AGREED WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS TO HOLD THE FUNERAL TODAY, MAR 17, ON GROUNDS THAT SOONER HIS FATHER IS BURIED, THE SOONER SITUATION CAN BE CALMED. FUNERAL HAS BEEN SET FOR 1300 LOCAL TODAY, AT UKTAHRAH. LOCAL PAPERS MORNING OF MAR 17 CARRIED DETAILS ON ARRANGEMENTS. (ON RECOMMENDATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND IN LINE WITH OUR OWN CONFIDENTIAL

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ASSESSMENT OF THE SECURITY RISKS, EMBASSY WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE REPRESENTED AT FUNERAL.)

9. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ATTEMPTS CALM THE SITUATION. PRESIDENT SARKIS AND NUMEROUS LEADERS BOTH ON THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT HAVE CONDEMNED THE ASSASSINATION, EMPHASIZING BELIEF IT MUST HAVE BEEN DELIBERATE ACT OF PROVOCATION, AND URGING THE POPULATION TO REMAIN CALM. THE PRESS HAS TAKEN A SIMILAR NON-PARTISAN LINE. (L'ORIENT-LE JOUR HEADLINE: "UNANIMITY AGAINST THE PROVOCATEURS.")

10. WHO DID IT? WE HAVE NO CLUE AS TO IDENTITY OF ASSASSINS, NOR, ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS, DOES GOL. PRESS MAR 17 REPORTS THAT FOUR ASSASSINS WERE INVOLVED, RIDING IN A MAROON-COLORED PONTIAC "FIREBIRD." ACCORDING LOCAL AUTHORITIES IT HAD IRAQI LICENSE PLATE. ASSASSINATION TOOK PLACE AT 1420. THE DRIVER OF A SECOND VEHICLE, ONE SELIM HADDAD, REPORTEDLY FORCED TO GIVE THEM A RIDE AFTER THE CRIME, IS BEING HELD BY POLICE. CAMILLE GEAGEA, PROSECUTOR GENERAL AT THE COUR DE CASSATION, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO DIRECT THE INVESTIGATION. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS, WHO SPOKE ON TELEVISION BRIEFLY LATE MAR 16, EXPRESSED THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO FIND AND PROSECUTE THE PERPETRATORS. WE NOTE REMARKS AT PNC TO EFFECT CRIME WAS WORK OF AMERICAN AGENTS BUT DOUBT MANY LEBANESE WILL TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY. THERE FAR TOO MANY STRICTLY LOCAL POSSIBILITIES.

11. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S HELPFUL STATEMENT OF REGRET FEATURED PROMINENTLY BY PRESS.  
PARKER

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## Message Attributes

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